

THE FIELD NATURALIST

BULLETIN OF THE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO FIELD NATURALIST CLUB

MEETINGS - 1st Quarter 1983

You are invited to attend the Annual General Meeting of the club to be held in the Audio -Visual Room of St. Mary's College on Thursday 13th January 1983 at 5.30 p.m.

Agenda

1. Confirmation of Minutes of last A.G.M.
2. Business arising out of the Minutes
3. Hon. Secretary's report for 1982
4. Hon. Treasurer's report for 1982
5. Election of officers for 1983
6. Other Business

You are also invited to attend the monthly meetings to be held on Thursdays February 10th and March 10th 1983 at the same time and place.

Agenda

1. Confirmation of Minutes
2. Business arising out of the Minutes
3. Lecture
4. Announcements
5. Exhibits and Miscellaneous notes
6. Other Business

MONTHLY LECTURE -MEETINGS

As in the past Lecture/Meetings will be held on the Second Thursday of every month (except when that day is a Public Holiday).

This year the Lectures will focus on our Natural Environment and the need for its proper management.

At time of writing our Programme of Activities for 1983 has not been finalized but your Management Committee is endeavouring to do so at an early date.

FIELD TRIPS

30th January 1983 - Mt. Chaguaramal - To leave P.O.S. at 6.00 a.m.
Rendezvous at George Earl Park.

27th February 1983)
27th March 1983) - To be announced

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

The Christmas Party which was held at the Naturalists House on Saturday 4th December 1982 was quite a success. However, the Organising Committee wishes to apologise to the latecomers whom they were unable to accommodate and trust that in future persons wishing to participate in any functions of the Club would so notify the organisers at an early date and so avoid any embarrassments.

HAPPY NEW YEAR EVERYONE

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NEW MEMBERS

What to expect from the Club and what the club expects of you.

1. The club has monthly lectures/meetings and outings which you are invited to attend. When on outings members are required to observe the objectives of the Club, especially in the conservation of Nature and natural resources which of course, demands that the surroundings be left as intact as possible and clean. All garbage should be taken back with you to be disposed of and not left for members to have to collect. No musical instruments should be brought on field trips to the forests - on these trips we want to listen to the music of nature. Every member should bring along his or her basic requirements for the day i.e. water and food.
2. Quarterly bulleting are sent to all financial members. Annual subscriptions become payable in January so that your 1983 subs are now due.
3. Biennially you will receive a copy of the Club's Journal "Living World."

FIELD EXCURSION UP MT. EL TUCUCHE
28TH NOVEMBER, 1982 - by T.F. FARRELL

Over the years the Club's policy has been to vary the time of the year for climbing Mount El Tucuche so as to get an overall picture of the flora and fauna of this largely untouched area, especially on the upper slopes. However, the choice of November produced rather negative results; few plants were in flower and the largely overcast sky made it bad for the entomologist.

Because of the experience on the last occasion of having some the cars broken open and some of their contents stolen Mr. Maurice Quesnel, the owner of Ortinola Estate, was asked if he could give us some protection. The original intention was, I understand, to let the cars into the pasture where the buffaloes are herded, with the buffaloes of course corraled for safety. Somehow or other this arrangement was not made, but on the direction of Mrs. Quesnel the cars were parked in a position where they could be easily overlooked from the estate. The Club is grateful to the Quesnels for this arrangement as none of the cars were interfered with.

The party at the beginning of the walk numbered thirty-eight. Three other members joined the party later on bringing to total up to forty-one. Due to some delay in arranging the parking of the cars, the party started walking somewhere about 8.00 a.m. The time of return varied considerably from member to member and was not accurately noted, but some returned, I understand, earlier than 4.00 p.m.

Richard French and his son were catching butterflies. They were hoping to find Adelphar and the Northern White Page but were unsuccessful. They did however catch an Orange Dog (*Papilio Anchisiades*) which is described by Barcout as a species becoming rarer and as being found anywhere in Trinidad in low-lying flowered areas, especially in the vicinity of citrus plantations. Its discovery high up El Tucuche is apparently of some significance.

Richard also heard the call of a bird that he did not know and I understand had not heard before in Trinidad. This was on the pathway before he got to the forest reserve. He tentatively suggests that it might be a Scaled Antpitta. The bird watchers of the club now have something to look out for on El Tucuche and hopefully to see and identify.

Victor Quesnel was another member who found something of interest. He was lucky in that he took the last bend in the ziz-gag pathway that climbs up the southern face of El Tucuche whereas the others took a short cut. There he found LISIANTHUS BRITTONII (no common name), a small tree growing up to 5 metres high. Actually this plant has only been found at the summit of El Tucuche and Victor wonders whether he picked the flowers, by which he identified the plant, from the same tree as the founder way back in the early twenties.

Victor also saw two snakes. One was a BEHBELLE CHEMIN, but the other he did not identify. Strange to relate, Richard French, his son and Victor Quesnel were the late comers on this excursion.

Right at the summit Luisa Zuniaga pointed out to me a small weed with minute white flowers. I was somewhat reluctant to collect but was eventually persuaded to do so. It turned out to be POLYGALA PANICULATA a plant that is found in the Aripo Savannah area.

Purely for the purpose of record I have to mention that I climbed El Tucuche at an age almost exactly one month short of 75 years. Father Graff held the previous record for the club, having done the climb - there is some uncertainty about this - at either 72 or 73 years of age. It would be interesting to know whether this is also a Trinidad record.

There has also been much uncertainty as to how long this walk is. The length has previously been estimated at between five to seven miles one way. On this trip one of the party had a pedometer which registered 20 miles on his return to the starting point. This may be dead accurate but it certainly points to an upward revision of the previous estimate. /not

During most of the walk there was no rain, and occasional sunshine. At the summit, visibility was only possible towards the south and the southern slopes of the Northern Range. The northern slopes were shrouded in mist. Rain started to fall at about 4.30 p.m. drenching, very unkindly, the stragglers on the return journey.

L. ZUNIAGA
HONORARY SECRETARY.